



Bhutan Winter Wonder Tour – 8 nights 24 December 2021 – 01 January 2022

Introduction:

We love Bhutan in winter! There are less tourists and the day time temps are quite mild compared with the rest of the northern hemisphere. It is generally dry and therefore excellent for cultural touring and day time valley hiking.

This small group tour, catering for a maximum of 8 persons, features the best of western Bhutan's sights & valleys. Furthermore it also includes the remote beauty of the Phobjikha valley.

Tour Itinerary Overview.

- 2 nights Thimphu with sightseeing, hiking and shopping options.
- 2 nights Phobjikha valley for hiking and exploring.
- 2 nights Punakha valley with monastery & Dzong visits.
- 2 nights Paro valley with Taktsang Monastery hike, shopping & sightseeing.

Reasons To Book This Small Group Tour

- This tour is a guaranteed departure.
- We only take a maximum of 8 persons on our tours.
- We tailor our tours for less driving and more sightseeing!
- 17 years experience, service & knowledge.
- Competitive pricing & well constructed itineraries.
- Access to our exclusive travel app COMPANION
- Our comprehensive Bhutan Visitor Information planning guide
- ATAS Accredited via our parent company MTA Travel.

CALL THE BHUTAN TRAVEL EXPERTS ON

AUS [toll free](#), James – [0412 416 111](#), Nicola – [0413 598 669](#)

Tour Inclusions:

- English speaking guide, driver & private coach.
- All touring & transfers throughout your journey.
- Bhutanese style 3* hotel accom with private bathrooms.
- All meals including bottled water daily.
- Entrance fees, hiking & sightseeing.
- Bhutan visa fees & visa processing.
- Government tourism royalties & local taxes.
- Bank transfer & communication fees.
- Professionally operated by Bhutan Tourism Corp – BTCL.



All travel referred to on this site is arranged through James & Nicola Irving t/a Bhutan & Beyond, affiliated with MTA Travel. MTA – Mobile Travel Agents is a member of Virtuoso, AFTA, ATAS and IATA accredited.
Email: enquiries@bhutan.com.au T: 1300 367 875 (toll free) T: 07 5661 1605
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Tour Exclusions:

- Flights to/from Paro are additional.
- Personal items: phone calls, laundry, drinks etc.
- Tipping – we will advise your tipping regime.
- Travel Insurance – mandatory to enter Bhutan.

Available On Request:

- Upgrade to Business Class on your flights.
- Ex-Australia airfares.
- Stopovers & additional Asian arrangements.

Cancellation Conditions:

Deposit date until 60 days prior departure – Loss of deposit.
From 60 days prior arrival in Bhutan – No refund permitted.

DETAILED TOUR ITINERARY – 24 December 2021 to 01 January 2022

Friday 24 December, 2021

Paro Valley to Thimphu Valley (1 hr 30 mins)

After clearing immigration and customs you will be greeted by your BTCL guide and driver. Transfer to Bhutan's capital Thimphu, travelling through the spectacular countryside en-route. All the houses and buildings in the Kingdom are painted and constructed in traditional Bhutanese style. On arrival into Thimphu take lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon visit the celebrated Royal Textile Academy & visit the National Memorial Stupa. Time permitting enjoy a wander also Thimphu's main street Norzin Lam and visit the craft bazaar.

Overnight Thimphu – [Bhutan Style 3* Hotel](#).



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Saturday 25 December:

Sightseeing & Hiking in Thimphu.

Merry Christmas!

This morning visit the awesome Golden Buddha which also offers an excellent 3 km hike option with sensational valley views. Continue on to the majestic Trashichhoe Dzong and the beautiful Tara Lhaden Zhingkhom lhakang (temple). Next visit the 'Simply Bhutan' traditional display village followed by a Bhutanese lunch. At 'Simply Bhutan' you can try ara tasting (local spirit); suja tasting (butter tea); try your hand at archery and enjoy a cultural performance of song & dance during the lunch.

This afternoon visit with the weekend markets where all the locals go to buy an array of fresh fruits & vegetables; home-ware, handicrafts and clothes.

Overnight Thimphu – Bhutan Style 3* Hotel.

Sunday 26 December:

Thimphu to Phobjikha Valley (4+ hrs)

This morning you will be transferred by road eastwards to the Phobjikha Valley. En-route pass the Semtokha Dzong. This was built in 1629 & the oldest fortress of its kind that guarded the Thimphu valley. Today it is a monastery. Continue ascending to Dochu La (pass) to view the 108 Stupas. These were commissioned by a former Queen as a memorial to those who lost their lives during the low intensity conflict in late 2002. This was when Bhutan evicted Indian separatist rebels camped in the jungle on the Bhutan – Indian border. On a clear day you will witness a breathtaking view of the eastern Himalaya.

When the Wangdue Phodrang Dzong comes into view, notice the large cacti that cover the hillside below. These were planted long ago to discourage invaders from climbing the steep slope to the Dzong. From the road view Rinchengang, one of Bhutan's oldest villages, which did not have access to water, electricity or schooling until the early 1990's. The craftsmen of Rinchengang are sought after for their skills in construction of Dzongs and Lhakhangs (temples).

Phobjikha is a glacial valley on the western slopes of the Black Mountains. It is one of the most beautiful open valleys in Bhutan. Potatoes are this region's primary cash crop and mainly exported to India. Phobjikha is also one of the most important wildlife preserves in the country and the winter home (late October to early February) of the rare black necked crane, which annually flies in from Tibet. There are also muntjaks (barking deer), wild boar, sambar, Himalayan black bear, leopard and red foxes.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley – [Bhutan Style 3* Hotel](#).



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Monday 27 December:

Sightseeing & Hiking in Phobjikha

While you are in Phobjikha you will visit the Black Crane nature information centre plus view the cranes from the special hide nearby. Furthermore visit the sacred Gangtey Monastery plus enjoy time to wander through Gangtey village and hike the Gangtey Nature Trail. There are many additional hikes available in this beautiful valley and your guide will advise you the best options.

Time permitting take an excursion to the remote Phobji region of the valley for a flat hike through temples, farm houses and tiny villages.

Overnight Phobjikha Valley – Bhutan Style 3* Hotel.

Tuesday 28 December:

Phobjikha Valley to Punakha Valley. (2+ hrs)

Depart early this morning to the Punakha Valley which holds the title as the winter capital because of its more temperate climate.

Arriving into Punakha stop at the markets in Mesina. After that visit Chimi Lhakhang, a monastery built by Lama Drukpa Kuenley (also known as the Divine Madman or Mad Monk), which is a pleasant, easy 20 minute walk across paddy fields. It is believed that childless women who visit the temple will conceive after receiving a “wang” (blessing) from the resident monk.

Take lunch at a local restaurant. This afternoon enjoy an orientation tour of the valley. This includes the nunnery and an excursion along a delightful country lane to the small village of Talo. Here you can wander through the serene grounds of the monastery with its beautiful gardens.

Overnight Punakha Valley – [Bhutan Style 3* Hotel](#).

Wednesday 29 December:

Sightseeing & hiking in Punakha.

Today enjoy a visit to the dramatic Punakha Dzong, which formerly served as the seat of the government. It is still the winter residence of the Dratsheng (Central Monk Body). This Dzong is an excellent example of how a medieval fortress, and a centre of both monastic and administrative functions, has evolved for modern day use.



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Wednesday 29 December - continued

We also recommend a fascinating hike to Khamsum Yulley Namgyel Chorten through fields of vegetables, rice paddies and tiny hamlets. This Chorten holds very special significance. It was consecrated in 1999 and dedicated to the protection of the former Crown Prince – today's current King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

Overnight Punakha Valley – Bhutan Style 3* Hotel.

Thursday 30 December:

Punakha Valley to Paro Valley (4+ hrs)

Depart Punakha early morning for your transfer westwards to the Paro Valley. Once again traversing Dochu La and arriving in Paro town in time for a late lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon enjoy an orientation tour of the major features in Paro town. This includes Rinpung Dzong, with its cantilever bridge, and the National Museum. Here you will view the fine collection of ancient Thangkha paintings, textiles, weapons and other artefacts. Finally we recommend a wander along the main streets which offers good shopping for jewellery and handicrafts.

Overnight Paro Valley – [Bhutan Style 3* Hotel.](#)

Friday 31 December:

Sightseeing & Hiking in the Paro Valley.

This morning take a pilgrimage hike to the very revered Taktsang Monastery, also known as Tigers Nest. All Bhutanese Buddhists strive to make this pilgrimage at least once in their lives. Each step they take on the trail awards merit for their future. Choose between a 1.5 hour round trip hike to the Monastery viewpoint or a longer 5 hour and more strenuous hike into the Monastery itself.

Tigers Nest clings impossibly to a cliff of rock at 800 m above the valley floor and where Guru Rinpoche flew on the back of a tigress to subdue the local demons. This was followed by 3 months meditation in a cave still visible in the monastery. In 1998 the monastery was seriously damaged by fire and has since been painstakingly reconstructed to its original condition and consecrated by the 4th King in 2005.

Take a Bhutanese vegetarian lunch at the Taktsang Viewpoint cafe before finishing your hike. Finally visit the nearby Kyichu Lhakhang – one of Bhutan's oldest and most beautiful temples boasting an orange tree that perpetually bears fruit.

Overnight Paro Valley – Bhutan Style 3*Hotel.



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Saturday 01 January, 2022

Day of departure

Morning departure from your hotel to Paro Airport for your onward flight.



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